



**United 4
Children**

Keeping Children Safe

Information and resources to help ensure children are safe, healthy, and successful learners.

**Scan for Digital
Version!**



Presented By:

 **CVS**
Health®

aetna®



Contents

Creating a Safe Home Environment	3
How Do I Know My Children Are Safe in Their Child Care Center?	5
How Do I Know a Child Care Program is Following the Rules?.....	5
How Do I Share a Concern?.....	6
What are Safe Sleep Practices?	8
Lead Exposure & Environmental Health Factors.....	8
Poisoning Emergencies & Poison Safety.....	9
What to Do in a Poisoning Emergency.....	10
Everyday Gun Safety.....	10
In the Event of An Active Shooter Emergency	11



Basic Home Safety

1. **Creating a Safe Home Environment**

- Keep cleaning products, medicines, and sharp objects locked away or out of reach.
- Use safety gates, outlet covers, and cabinet locks, especially for infants and toddlers.
- Secure heavy furniture and TVs to prevent tip-over accidents.

2. **Supervise Actively**

- Young children need constant, close supervision, especially near water, in the kitchen, or outdoors.
- Put phones down during potentially risky activities like cooking or bath time.
- Teach older siblings how to play gently and recognize when a child is too small for certain games.

3. **Preventing Falls**

- Always buckle children into highchairs, strollers, and changing tables.
- Keep floors clear of toys to reduce tripping hazards.
- Install window guards and keep furniture away from windows to prevent climbs.

4. **Keep Children Safe Around Water**

- Never leave a child alone near water, including bathtubs, pools, buckets, and even toilets.
- Empty water containers immediately after use.
- If you have a pool, use four-sided fencing with a self-latching gate.

5. **Burn and Fire Safety**

- Turn pot handles inward when using the stove and keep hot drinks out of reach.
- Install smoke detectors and test them monthly.
- Keep lighters and matches locked away.

6. **Car and Travel Safety**

- Use the correct car seat for the child's age, height, and weight.
- Keep children rear-facing as long as possible based on seat guidelines.
- Never leave a child alone in a vehicle, not even for a minute or to run a quick errand.

7. **Pet and Animal Safety**

- Always supervise children around pets.
- Teach children to ask before petting any animal.
- Keep pets' vaccinations up to date.

8. **Safe Play and Outdoor Awareness**

- Choose age-appropriate toys; check labels for choking hazards.
- Make sure outdoor play areas have soft landing surfaces like grass, mulch, or rubber.
- Teach children road safety: look both ways, use crosswalks, and stay close to adults.

9. Choking & Suffocation

- Cut food into small pieces, especially if round (grapes, hot dogs, cherry tomatoes).
- Supervise meals and snacks; children should sit while eating.
- Avoid popcorn, whole nuts, hard candy, gum for young children.
- Keep plastic bags and balloons out of reach.

10. Medication & Illness Safety

- Never share prescription medication between children.
- Use proper dosing tools (not kitchen spoons).
- Keep fever reducers locked and track dosing times.
- Know when to keep children home from child care (fever, vomiting, diarrhea).

11. Strangulation & Cord Safety

- Keep window blind cords secured or use cordless blinds.
- Avoid necklaces, drawstrings, or cords on clothing for young children.
- Never leave children unattended with ropes, cords, or long strings.

12. Digital & Media Safety (Optional but Increasingly Relevant)

- Use parental controls on devices.
- Avoid unsupervised screen time.
- Be cautious with video calls and online content.
- Model safe technology use.

13. Sun & Heat Safety

- Never leave children in parked cars
- Use sunscreen and protective clothing.
- Encourage hydration during outdoor play.
- Watch for signs of heat exhaustion.

14. Positive Parenting Prevents Harm

- Use calm, consistent discipline, never physical punishment.
- Teach children simple safety rules using clear, encouraging language.
- Build routines that help children feel secure and reduce risky behavior.
- Learn more about alternative discipline methods and the negative effects of corporal punishment by visiting [United 4 Children's Resource & Referral Webpage](#) or scanning the QR code below.



How Do I Know My Children Are Safe in Their Child Care Center?

State governments set minimum health and safety requirements for licensed child care programs, as well as license-exempt child care programs operated by a religious organization and nursery schools. Child care programs must meet these requirements to legally operate their business. Those minimum requirements cover things like ongoing training for child care staff on topics such as CPR and safe sleep, emergency planning, sanitation standards, and a criminal background check for child care program staff.

View Missouri licensing rules for family child care homes by [viewing the PDF](#) or scanning the QR code below:



View licensing rules for group child care homes and child care centers by [viewing the PDF](#) or scanning the QR code below:



View rules for license-exempt religious organizations and nursery schools by [viewing the PDF](#) or scanning the QR code below:



How Do I Know a Child Care Program is Following the Rules?

You can view inspection reports and substantiated complaints for all licensed and license-exempt providers, as well as providers that receive child care subsidy by [visiting DESE's website](#) or scanning the QR code below:



How Do I Share a Concern?

If you want to file a health and safety complaint against a child care program, the State of Missouri will review your complaint and determine if an investigation is needed. If a report is investigated, it is assigned to a Compliance Inspector. Depending on the type of complaint, the child care facility may be referred for possible legal action. The summary of all substantiated complaints is available to the public through the Show Me Child Care Provider Search.

To file a health and safety complaint, [visit DESE's website](#), or scan the QR code below:



You can also contact your region's licensing compliance office to share concerns or ask questions. Please see the contact information below. You can also [visit DESE's website](#), or scan the QR code below:





Missouri Child Care Compliance Offices

Raytown Regional Office for Child Care Compliance

Phone: (816) 350-5450

Fax: (816) 350-8925

Address: 8800 E 63rd, Suite 600. Raytown, MO 64133

Macon Regional Office for Child Care Compliance

Phone: (660) 385-3125

Fax: (660) 385-6214

Address: 1716 Prospect, Suite C. Macon, MO 63552

Springfield Regional Office for Child Care Compliance

Phone: (417) 895-6541

Fax: (417) 895-6994

Address: Landers State Office Building
149 Park Central Square, Suite 116. Springfield, MO 65806

Columbia Regional Office for Child Care Compliance

Phone: (573) 441-6226

Fax: (573) 884-7607

Address: 900 W. Nifong, Suite 215. Columbia, MO 65203

Jefferson City Regional Office for Child Care Compliance

Phone: (573) 751-2891

Fax: (573) 526-5345

Address: 205 Jefferson Street, 1st Floor. Jefferson City, MO 65101

St. Louis Regional Office for Child Care Compliance

Phone: (314) 877-0210

Fax: (314) 877-0203

Address: 220 South Jefferson Avenue, 2nd Floor. St. Louis, MO 63103

Cape Girardeau Office for Child Care Compliance

Phone: (573) 290-5809

Fax: (573) 290-5854

Address: 471 Siemers Drive, Suite H. Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

What are Safe Sleep Practices?

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the number one cause of death for infants under one year of age. Safe sleep practices, especially those recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), are proven to significantly reduce this risk. The AAP Safe Sleep Recommendations help ensure a safer sleep environment throughout an infant's first year of life. Their recommendations include:

- Always place infants flat on their back for every sleep.
- Use a firm, flat, non-inclined sleep surface to reduce the risk of suffocation, wedging, or entrapment.
- Feeding children human milk is associated with a reduced risk of SIDS.
- Room-share without bed-sharing—keep the infant close, but on their own separate surface designed for babies.
- Keep soft objects out of the sleep area, including pillows, toys, quilts, comforters, and loose bedding such as blankets or non-fitted sheets.
- Consider offering a pacifier at naptime and bedtime.
- Avoid smoke and nicotine exposure during pregnancy and after birth.
- Avoid alcohol, marijuana, opioids, and illicit drug use during pregnancy and after birth.
- Prevent overheating and avoid head covering during sleep.
- Seek regular prenatal care during pregnancy, as recommended by AAP.
- Ensure infants are immunized following AAP and CDC guidelines.
- Provide supervised tummy time while the baby is awake to support development and prevent positional flat spots on the head.
- Avoid weighted blankets and weighted swaddles, as they can be unsafe.
- Stop all swaddling once the infant shows signs of rolling (typically around 3–4 months) to prevent suffocation.

For more information on safe sleeping practices, you can [visit the American Academy of Pediatrics website](#), or scan the QR code below:



Lead Exposure & Environmental Health Factors.

Many things in the environment can affect your children's health. Hazardous substances found in the air, soil, and water can originate from a variety of sources, such as agricultural and industrial activities, mining operations, landfills, and leaky underground storage tanks.

For more information about environmental health factors, you can [visit the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Service's website](#), or scan the QR code below:



Lead poisoning is one of the most common and preventable environmental health problems in Missouri. Lead exposure in children can cause learning and behavioral problems, lower IQ levels and interfere with growth and hearing. The only way to know if a child has lead poisoning is to have his or her blood tested.

For more information about lead poisoning, you can [visit the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Service's website](#), or scan the QR code below:



Poisoning Emergencies & Poison Safety

Unintentional poisoning is a leading cause of injury among young children, but most poisoning is preventable. Infants and toddlers explore their world by touching and tasting, making safe storage and quick action essential for keeping them safe. Understanding how to prevent exposures, and what to do if one occurs, helps protect children in both home and caregiving settings.

Preventing Poisonings at Home & in Child Care Settings

1. Safe Storage

- Keep all medications, vitamins, cleaning supplies, alcohol, cannabis products, laundry pods, and chemicals locked up, out of sight, and out of reach.
- Use child-resistant packaging whenever possible—but remember it is not child-proof.
- Store poisons in their original containers with labels intact.
- Never call medicine “candy,” even to encourage a child to take it.

2. Household Habits That Reduce Risk

- Put cleaning products and medications away right after use, even if you plan to use them again soon.
- Keep purses, backpacks, and bags containing medication away from children.
- Safely dispose of unused or expired medications through a community take-back program.
- Keep indoor plants out of reach; some are toxic if eaten.

3. Food, Cleaning, & Medication Look-Alikes

- Children can confuse cleaners with drinks or pills with candy.
- Use extra caution with colorful pods, gummies, infused edibles, or liquids stored in non-original containers.

What to Do in a Poisoning Emergency

If a child may have swallowed, touched, or inhaled something poisonous:

1. Remember to Stay calm and act quickly.

2. Call Poison Help right away at: 1-800-222-1222.

- Experts are available 24/7 and can tell you exactly what to do.
- Have the product container or name available for the dispatcher.

3. If the child is unconscious, having trouble breathing, or not responsive, call 911 immediately.

- Do NOT make the child vomit unless explicitly instructed by Poison Help or medical professionals.
- Rinse skin or eyes with lukewarm water for 15–20 minutes if exposed to chemicals.
- If a child inhaled fumes, move them to fresh air right away.

4. After the Incident

- Follow all instructions from Poison Help or emergency personnel.
- Watch for delayed symptoms if advised.
- Review home storage and safety practices to prevent future incidents.
- Comfort the child, accidental poisoning can be frightening for them as well.

Everyday Gun Safety

Firearm injuries are now one of the leading causes of death for children and teens in the United States, which is especially tragic when you consider that most of these tragedies are preventable.

Safe firearm storage and keeping guns locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition, has proven to greatly reduce the risk of accidental injury, and unauthorized access by children. The following guidance helps families and caregivers create safer home and caregiving environments through responsible storage, supervision, and communication.

1. Safe Storage

- The #1 way to prevent childhood firearm accidents is through safe storage.
- Always store guns locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition.
- Always use a gun safe, lockbox, or trigger lock.
- Keep keys or combinations out of children's reach.



2. **Child Safety**

- Teach children to never touch a firearm and to tell an adult immediately if they find one.
- Make sure they understand what to do if they see a gun or find one. “Stop. Don’t touch. Leave the area. Tell an adult.”

3. **Responsible Handling**

- Treat every firearm as if it is loaded.
- Never point a gun at anything you do not intend to shoot.
- Keep your finger off the trigger until you’re ready to fire.
- Be aware of your target and what is beyond it.

4. **Transporting Firearms**

- Follow local laws.
- Keep guns unloaded and locked during transport.

In the Event of An Active Shooter Emergency

Active shooter events are a leading safety concern for families and caregivers. Knowing what to do in a crisis can save lives. Clear, practiced steps can prepare adults to act quickly and help keep children safe during an active shooter or firearm threat. Parents and educators should follow the nationally recommended “**Run, Hide, Fight**” methodology and educators should have a personalized plan for their child care facility and classroom. The following recommendations provide families and caregivers with practical actions to protect themselves and the children in their care during an active shooter emergency.

1. **Run** (If safe to do so)

- Take children by the hand and move away from the danger quickly.
- Leave belongings behind.
- Once safe, call 911.
- Keep your hands visible when police arrive.

2. **Hide** (if you cannot leave or evacuate children)

- Find a secure room, lock or barricade the door if possible.
- Keep children quiet, calm, and close.
- Silence phones, turn off lights, and remain quiet
- Stay low, out of shooter’s view, and behind solid objects

3. **Fight** (Only as a last resort to protect yourself and children)

- Only if a threat comes directly to you and no other options remain.
- Use throwable objects, your environment, or improvised weapons to distract or stop the attacker.

- 
- Act decisively and commit fully to your actions. There is no time to second guess or act unconfidently. Remember, your goal is to protect the lives of yourself and others.

4. When Law Enforcement Arrives

- Keep hands up and empty.
- Follow instructions immediately.
- If the shooter is still active, direct the police towards them.
- Do not point, shout, or make sudden movements.